In the claims:

Please **amend** the currently pending claims by substituting the following:

Claim 1 (currently Amended): A multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus for recording and reproducing digital audio data by using multiple tracks, comprising:

a recording ~~track-designating~~ track-setting section that ~~designates at least one track for recording, from~~ sets each of a plurality of tracks to one of a recording ON state and a recording OFF state, as desired;

a mute track-setting section that sets each of a plurality of tracks to one of a mute ON state and a mute OFF state, as desired, the digital audio data being recorded on the tracks set to the recording ON state while the recorded digital audio data being reproduced from the tracks set to the mute OFF state;

a reproducible track number-determining section that determines a number of tracks ~~that can be reproduced~~ available for simultaneous reproduction, ~~in response to the designation of the at least one track for recording~~ based on a number of tracks of the plurality of tracks set to the recording ON state; and

a reproducing track number-limiting section that limits a number of tracks ~~for reproduction to the number of tracks that can be reproduced~~ to be set to the mute OFF state, by automatically ~~muting~~ changing at least predetermined one of the tracks from the mute OFF state to the mute ON state when said recording track-setting section increases the number of tracks set to the recording ON state and the number of tracks available for simultaneous reproduction determined by said reproducible track number-determining section decreases below the number of tracks set to the mute OFF state, while inhibiting said mute track-setting section from setting a number of tracks more than

the number of tracks available for simultaneous reproduction determined by said reproducible track number-determining section to the mute OFF state ~~designated for reproduction when the number of tracks designated for reproduction is larger than the number of tracks that can be reproduced~~.

Claims 2 - 8 (cancelled)

Claim 9 (currently Amended): A multi-track digital recording/reproducing method using a multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus for recording and reproducing digital audio data by using multiple tracks, the multi-track digital recording/reproducing method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

a recording track-setting step of setting each of ~~designating at least one track for recording, from~~ a plurality of tracks to one of a recording ON state and a recording OFF state, as desired;

a mute track-setting step of setting each of a plurality of tracks to one of a mute ON state and a mute OFF state, as desired, the digital audio data being recorded on the tracks set to the recording ON state while the recorded digital audio data being reproduced from the tracks set to the mute OFF state;

a reproducible track number-determining step of determining a number of tracks ~~that can be reproduced~~ available for simultaneous reproduction, ~~in response to the designation of the at least one track for recording~~ based on a number of tracks of the plurality of tracks set to the recording ON state; and

a reproducing track number-limiting of limiting a number of tracks ~~for reproduction to the number of tracks that can be reproduced~~ to be set to the mute OFF state, by automatically ~~muting~~ changing at least predetermined one of the tracks ~~designated for reproduction~~ from the mute OFF

state to the mute ON state when ~~the number of tracks designated for reproduction is larger than the number of tracks that can be reproduced~~ said recording track-setting step increases the number of tracks set to the recording ON state and the number of tracks available for simultaneous reproduction determined in said reproducible track number-determining step decreases below the number of tracks set to the mute OFF state, while inhibiting said mute track-setting step from setting a number of tracks more than the number of tracks available for simultaneous reproduction determined in said reproducible track number-determining step to the mute OFF state.

Claims 10 – 13 (cancelled)

Claim 14 (currently amended): A recording/reproducing program executed by a computer, the program using a multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus for recording and reproducing digital audio data by using multiple tracks,

the program comprising:

a recording ~~track-designating~~ track-setting module that ~~designates at least one track for recording, from~~ sets each of a plurality of tracks to one of a recording ON state and a recording OFF state, as desired;

a mute track-setting module that sets each of a plurality of tracks to one of a mute ON state and a mute OFF state, as desired, the digital audio data being recorded on the tracks set to the recording ON state while the recorded digital audio data being reproduced from the tracks set to the mute OFF state;

a reproducible track number-determining module that determines a number of tracks ~~that can be reproduced~~ available for simultaneous reproduction, ~~in response to the designation of the at least~~

~~one track for recording~~ based on a number of tracks of the plurality of tracks set to the recording ON state; and

a reproducing track number-limiting module that limits a number of tracks ~~for reproduction to the number of tracks that can be reproduced~~ to be set to the mute OFF state, by automatically ~~muting~~ changing at least predetermined one of the tracks ~~designated for reproduction~~ from the mute OFF state to the mute ON state when ~~the number of tracks designated for reproduction is larger than the number of tracks that can be reproduced~~ said recording track-setting module increases the number of tracks set to the recording ON state and the number of tracks available for simultaneous reproduction determined by said reproducible track number-determining module decreases below the number of tracks set to the mute OFF state, while inhibiting said mute track-setting module from setting a number of tracks more than the number of tracks available for simultaneous reproduction determined by said reproducible track number-determining module to the mute OFF state.

Claims 15 - 18 (cancelled)

Claim 19 (new): A multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, including a mode designating section that designates an operation mode corresponding to a bit number of the digital audio data to be recorded in the operation mode from among a plurality of operation modes, and wherein said reproducible track number-determining section determines the number of tracks available for simultaneous reproduction, based on the designated operation mode and the number of tracks set to the recording ON state.

Claim 20 (new): A multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus for recording and reproducing digital audio data by using multiple tracks, comprising:

a display section;

a plurality of input sections that input audio data from at least one external device;

a plurality of mixing input channels that control characteristics of the audio data inputted thereto, and output the audio data;

an input patch section that causes said display section to display a status of assignment of the plurality of input sections to the plurality of mixing input channels, changes the status of assignment according to user's operation, and connects between the plurality of input sections and the plurality of mixing input channels so as to selectively input the audio data from the plurality of input sections to the plurality of mixing input channels according to the changed status of assignment;

a plurality of mixing buses that mix a plurality of the audio data inputted thereto, and output the mixed audio data;

a mixing selection section that causes said display section to display an output status of the audio data outputted from the plurality of mixing input channels to the plurality of mixing buses, changes the output status according to user's operation, and selectively outputs the audio data from the plurality of mixing input channels to the plurality of mixing buses according to the changed output status;

a recorder that is capable of recording a plurality of the audio data supplied thereto on a plurality of tracks simultaneously;

a recording selection section that causes said display section to display a status of assignment of the plurality of mixing buses or the plurality of mixing input channels to the plurality of tracks, changes the status of assignment according to user's operation, and selectively inputs the audio data

outputted from the plurality of mixing buses or the plurality of mixing input channels to the plurality of tracks;

a selecting section that selects any one of the plurality of mixing input channels; and

a channel-path display control section that causes said display section to display in graphical representation, concerning the mixing input channel selected by said selecting section, the status of assignment changed by said input patch section, the output status changed by said mixing selection section, and the status of assignment changed by said recording selection section, in an arrangement along a transfer path of the audio data.

Claim 21 (new): A multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus for recording and reproducing digital audio data by using multiple tracks, comprising:

a plurality of input sections that input audio data from at least one external device;

a plurality of mixing input channels that control characteristics of the audio data inputted thereto, and output the audio data;

a recorder that is capable of recording or reproducing a plurality of the audio data supplied thereto on or from a plurality of tracks thereof simultaneously;

a plurality of recorder channels that are in fixed association with respective ones of the plurality of tracks of said recorder, the plurality of recorder channels each inputting the audio data from an associated one of the plurality of tracks, controlling characteristics of the inputted audio data, and outputting the audio data;

a plurality of mixing buses that selectively input and mix a plurality of the audio data outputted from the plurality of mixing input channels and the plurality of recorder channels, and output the mixed audio data.

an input patch section that selectively assigns at least one of the plurality of input sections to at least one of the plurality of mixing input channels according to user's operation, and connects between the at least one of the plurality of input sections and the at least one of the plurality of mixing input channels so as to input the audio data from the at least one of the plurality of input sections to the at least one of the plurality of mixing input channels according to the assignment; and

a recording selection section that assigns at least one of the plurality of mixing buses or at least one of the plurality of mixing input channels to at least one of the plurality of tracks according to user's operation, and connects between the at least one of the plurality of mixing buses or the at least one of the plurality of mixing input channels and the at least one of the plurality of tracks so as to input the audio data from the at least one of the plurality of mixing buses or the at least one of the plurality of mixing input channels to the at least one of the plurality of tracks according to the assignment by said recording selection section.

Claim 22 (new): A multi-track digital recording/reproducing apparatus for recording and reproducing digital audio data by using multiple tracks, comprising:

a plurality of input sections that input audio data from at least one external device;

a plurality of input channels that control characteristics of the audio data inputted thereto, and output the audio data;

a plurality of mixing buses that input and mix a plurality of the audio data outputted from the plurality of mixing input channels, and output the mixed audio data;

a recorder that is capable of recording or reproducing a plurality of audio data supplied thereto on or from a plurality of tracks simultaneously;

an input patch that selectively assigns at least one of the plurality of input sections to at least

one of the plurality of input channels, and connects between the at least one of the plurality of input sections and the at least one of the plurality of input channels so as to input the audio data from the at least one of the plurality of input sections to the at least one of the plurality of input channels according to the assignment;

a recording selector that assigns at least one of the plurality of mixing buses and at least one of the plurality of input channels to at least one of the plurality of tracks, and connects between the at least one of the plurality of mixing buses or the at least one of the plurality of input channels and the at least one of the plurality of tracks so as to input the audio data from the at least one of the plurality of mixing buses or the at least one of the plurality of input channels to the at least one of the plurality of tracks according to the assignment by said recording selector; and

a collective setting section that is responsive to user's instructions for collectively setting including designation of the plurality of input sections, the plurality of input channels, and the plurality of tracks, for causing said input patch to assign each of the plurality of input sections to an associated one of the plurality of input channels, and causing said recording selector to assign each of the plurality of input channels to an associated one of the tracks in a collective manner.